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ABSTRACT

A review of the status of English language instruction in Sweden begins with an overview of the role of English in the society in general. The status of English use and instruction in the educational system at all levels (elementary, secondary, higher, adult, and teacher) is outlined, as well as the characteristics and training of English language instructors, the type and availability of instructional materials, educational administration and planning in relation to English teaching, the use of English outside the educational system, British and American support, commercial opportunities related to English instruction, creative writing, language research, and other sources of information. The main threat to English instruction in Sweden is the increasing complexity of the curriculum and limited time devoted to English language at all levels. Potential English teachers and college English majors are not required to spend time in an English-speaking country. The generally high English proficiency level in the country is attributed more to exposure to English in Sweden than to the school system's success. (MSE)

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English Teaching Profile

Sweden

November 1986

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1 Role and status of English

Of the foreign languages used in Sweden, English is by far the most widely used. The English department of the University of Stockholm recently carried out a survey of Swedish speakers' use of English in Sweden. Almost 90 per cent of those responding reported that they watched television programmes in English at least once a month, just over 58 per cent that they read text in English at least once a month, 38 per cent that they listened to English, 34.5 per cent that they spoke English, and nearly 32 per cent that they wrote English as frequently. Concern is sometimes expressed about the increasing domination of English and the decline in the number of people learning other foreign languages, and also about the effects use of English has on the vocabulary and grammar of Swedish.

English is, however, a foreign language: the language of the educational system is Swedish. Nevertheless, because of the small size of the market for works published in Swedish, there is reliance in tertiary education on textbooks in foreign languages - mainly English, although some in French and German. English is required as an entrance qualification for almost all further education and students are expected to be able to read English in all disciplines.

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The role of English could in fact almost be regarded as that of a second language in postgraduate studies. The ruling that all theses must be provided with an abstract in a major foreign language has meant that the vast majority have an abstract in English. Because of the increasing importance of

1 Jones D, The Purposes for which English is Used in Sweden, English in Sweden, Report No 5, Department of English, University of Stockholm 1983.

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publication and citation and the relative dearth of scholarly periodicals published in Swedish, it is becoming more and more common for theses to be written and defended in English - in medicine, the natural sciences, behavioural sciences, economics, technology, as well as in the humanities. Many postgraduate seminars with visiting scholars are conducted as a matter of course in the medium of English.

English is widely used within the business world in Sweden. In the Stockholm survey nearly forty per cent of those who were working reported that their job regularly entailed speaking and writing in English, around twenty-two per cent that they wrote in English, and nearly eighteen per cent that they had to listen to English. In addition, because of the nature of Swedish industry and the importance of international trade, many Swedes involved in business or in the professions are called upon to travel extensively and operate in English while abroad.

The Stockholm survey also showed that for the vast majority of respondents English was used most often in their leisure time. Not only did nearly ninety per cent watch television programmes at least once a month, but sixty-three per cent reported that in their leisure activities they read English, fifty-two per cent that they spoke English, forty and a half per cent that they listened to English, and thirty-eight and a third per cent that they wrote in English.

The very high percentage of Swedish people watching television programmes in English is explained by the fact that both of the television channels in Sweden are state-financed through licence fees and because of budget constraints they are obliged to buy about half of their material from other countries. A survey of children's viewing published by Swedish Radio in 1979[1] showed that the majority of the programmes produced in Sweden are current affairs programmes or programmes dealing with Swedish cultural and social questions, and of the most popular entertainment programmes seventy-five per cent were purchased abroad. This survey also established that half of all the programmes purchased in the first half of 1975 were bought from the United Kingdom or the the United States. Since then rising production costs have exacerbated this situation and a report published by Swedish Radio in 1983[2] suggested that eighty-three per cent of all fiction programmes were produced abroad. Indeed, of the sixty programmes for children analysed in this report sixteen were in English: eight produced in the United States, four in the United Kingdom, two in Australia and two in New Zealand.

Films in English, whether shown on television or in the cinema, are rarely dubbed into Swedish but merely sub-titled. (The major exceptions are films intended for children under the age of seven and television documentaries.) This means that going to the cinema also involves exposure to English in the majority of cases. Cinema attendance is high in Sweden and there are large numbers of films shown, most of which have been produced in English. It is films in Swedish or English that draw the largest audiences: films in other languages are regarded as being directed to minority interests.

Other recent developments in the distribution of visual materials are likely to increase exposure to English in Sweden. Video films are popular. The majority of video films available are in English, especially those which are less likely to be shown on television channels. The sub-titling of video

1 von Feilitzen, Filipson and Schylter, 'Open Your Eyes to Children's Viewing', Swedish Radio, Stockholm 1979

2 Abrahamsson, 'TV-världen och verkligheten' (The World of Television and Reality), Swedish Radio, Stockholm 1983

films which have not originally been imported for cinema distribution is uncertain and erratic. The most popular satellite television channel in Sweden, Sky Channel, is, of course, not sub-titled at all.

The Swedish theatres often produce translations from English: Ingmar Bergman has recently produced a notable version of King Lear and the Stockholm City Theatre has produced a series of Shakespeare's plays in an auditorium modelled on the Globe. The commercial theatres adapt much of their material from Broadway or the West End. One interesting side effect of the popularity of the British-made television series (like Brideshead Revisited for instance) is that in Stockholm there are now two or three small theatres specializing in productions in English, using English actors known from these series.

A great deal of the popular music played on Swedish Radio's third light music channel and on the local radio stations in Sweden also feature lyrics in English. Much of it is produced in the United Kingdom or the United States, and most Swedish bands produce at least some of their lyrics in English (ABBA have probably had as much impact on the use of English world-wide as any British band has had).

In the Stockholm survey respondents were asked to indicate what kind of material they read in English. A significiant number reported that they read fiction in English: twenty and a half per cent. A slightly larger proportion - twenty-three and a forty-fourth per cent - reported that they read letters in English. Newspapers were read by twenty-eight per cent, and an equally large percentage reported that they read literature connected with their work. Handbooks and magazines dealing with their hobbies were read by twelve per cent. Books, newspapers and magazines in English are readily available in Sweden.

Many of the books which are read in Swedish are in fact translations from English, especially more popular forms of literature. In many cases novels written by well-known British novelists are published in translation into Swedish simultaneously with the first English edition. (This does not seem to be true of works by American authors or authors writing in other languages.) Few Swedish novelists write fiction directly in English, but works of non-fiction are often written in English or translated by the author into English.

The interest of Swedish publishers in publishing in Britain and America is shared by the periodicals. The review sections of the Stockholm dailies often deal with new books published in English or contain surveys of the state of the novel or of drama in Britain and the United States. Extended reviews or articles dealing with new scholarly works in English are also a frequent feature of the morning dailies. This awareness of what is being published in English is also shown by journalists dealing with science, technology or economics, and many background articles in the Swedish press can be shown to have been based on recent British or American periodicals.

2 English within the education system

The school system

English is a compulsory subject for all children within the state educational system (and it is virtually impossible for children not to be educated within the state system) for a minimum of six years - the vast majority of children study English for a longer period.

The Swedish school system is divided up into 'grundskolan', a compulsory nine year primary school, and 'gymnasieskolan', an optional upper secondary school which is attended for two, three or four years. All children begin school at the age of seven and attend primary school for nine years until they are sixteen. This primary school is divided up into three levels: 'lagstadiet' (junior level) from 7 to 10, 'mellanstadiet' (intermediate level) from 10 to 13, and 'hogstadiet' (senior level) from 13 to 16. The three levels need not always be housed in the same building, and transfer between the different levels can involve moving to new buildings and the classes being regrouped or reorganized. It is, however, the ambition of the school system that during each of the first two levels children will remain in the same class of twenty-five children and have the same teacher for the three consecutive years.

Children begin to study English for two hours a week in their last year of junior level, and continue to study it for four hours a week on average for the rest of their primary school career. Until recently, children were given the option of choosing to study either a general course in English or a 'special' course, the latter having a rather more demanding syllabus. However, this choice, and the specialization it implied, has recently been abolished.

After finishing primary school, children can choose to go on with their education and to apply for one of the courses of study (lines) offered within the upper secondary school. In general these courses are described as being either theoretical, i.e. they prepare students for further study at university level, or practical, when they provide students with a job qualification. The longest of the courses is the four-year technological line. The other theoretical lines, natural sciences, liberal arts and economics, are three-year courses.

Most of the vocational lines are two-year courses, but some can be three, such as the one which prepares students for work within the medical care and social welfare sector. Upper secondary schools all over the country provide the same range of theoretical lines, but the vocational lines offered and the length of the vocational lines differs from area to area depending on the nature of local employment.

In principle the upper secondary school is a voluntary school but as the prospects of finding work at the age of sixteen in Sweden are today very limited, the vast majority of children continue attending school after the age of sixteen. About three-quarters of those who leave at the age of sixteen elect to go back to upper secondary school later, usually after one year, although upper secondary schools are open to people of any age and many classes contain adult students as well. Figures for the number of pupils going on to upper secondary school vary from area to area, again depending on the local employment situation, but of all those leaving primary school in 1983, ninety-seven per cent applied to enter the upper secondary school, and eighty-five per cent were given places. Where upper secondary school courses are over-subscribed, applicants are selected on the basis of the grades they are given in the last year of primary school. This can mean that the courses preparing cosmetologists or nursery school teachers are those that are filled with the best school leavers.

English is a compulsory subject in almost all courses offered in the upper secondary school, where it is taught for four hours a week during the first two years of a course and three hours a week in the third year. (It is not taught at all during the fourth year of the technological line.)

The syllabuses for teaching in the primary school and in the upper secondary school are laid down by 'Skoloverstyrelsen' (The National Board of Education)

in Stockholm. The current syllabus for the primary school was published in 1980. The current syllabus for the upper secondary school dates from 1965 and work on reform of this syllabus has been going on since 1984. The major section of both syllabuses deals with the overall role of the school system, its organization and working methods. The syllabuses for the different subjects are fairly brief documents. For English the syllabus states the reasons why the subject is being taught and its goals, and lists in very broad terms the types of activities and teaching items that should be included. They appear to give schools and teachers a reasonable degree of latitude in interpreting them. Nevertheless most teachers seem to feel that these syllabuses guide their work quite rigidly. There are two reasons for this.

The grades that pupils at the end of primary school and at the end of each year of upper secondary school are given by the teacher on the basis of the pupil's work during the year. To help teachers assess the overall level of the class, and therefore to award the right proportion of grades (1-5), the National Board provides a central testing service using objective testing methods with a fairly rigid marking key. The National Board emphasizes that what is tested are the results of complete classes and not the individuals within the class, and many teachers experience them as an assessment of their own success. The central tests are seen as a concrete interpretation of the content of the syllabuses.

The National Board also exercises control over the textbooks used by listing those that are approved. Despite reductions in educational budgets recently, the school textbook market is still a lucrative one, and is supplied almost exclusively by Swedish educational publishers. The textbooks used in primary school, and to a lesser extent those used in the upper secondary schools, are part of a comprehensive kit of teaching aids, attainment tests and the like, and provide teachers with fairly detailed instructions for their work. Many teachers see the textbooks that they are using as concrete restatements of the syllabus in force.

English teaching in primary schools is aimed mainly at giving children proficiency in the oral skills. Textbooks still use texts as the primary source of language input and written exercises are of course used extensively. In the choice of grammatical structures and vocabulary items to be taught, it is, however, the pupils' intended use of the language in oral exchanges in social contexts which is borne in mind.

In theory, all lines in the upper secondary school have the same syllabus for English, a syllabus which was in fact written before many of the vocational lines had come into being. Most teachers teaching these courses probably have aims similar to those of the primary school, although there is likely to be more emphasis on systematic coverage of the grammar of English mentioned in the syllabus, and vocabulary teaching is also expected to match up with the vocational orientation of the course as a whole. Only in the second and third years of the upper secondary school courses is any teaching of English literature enjoined by the syllabus. This mainly consists of the study of literary texts, often in extracts, anthologized in textbooks, although many pupils do read complete works, and it is not intended to provide any kind of survey of literature in English.

This means that there is a wide variety of ability in English among school leavers. In an international comparison[1] of the teaching of English in ten countries, the results of Swedish pupils in the primary school and in the

1 Lewis and Massad, The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Ten Countries, Almqvist and Wiksell International, Stockholm 1975

upper secondary school compared well with those of other countries. According to a widely used vocabulary teaching handbook, at the end of the primary school a pupil is supposed to have not only some mastery of the basic structures but also a vocabulary of about 2,700 words in English. It is probably fair to say that many children leave primary school with some fluency in spoken English - although whether this is a result of the school system or of the dominance of English in the entertainment industry is a vexed issue.

In the vast majority of upper secondary school courses, fluency in the oral skills improves. In many of the vocational lines, motivation for learning English may be low, but pupils leaving the longer and more theoretical upper secondary school courses are often very proficient both orally and in their ability to read and write English, with vocabularies varying from 4,000 words (for the least successful) to 10,000. There are also, however, major differences between different comparable schools as to where to lay the emphasis of teaching in English, and this is reflected in differences in the abilities of school leavers.

The system of standardized tests described above is the one centralized method used to inspect or compare the standard of English teaching. The other method used is to organize teachers' days, when teachers teaching the same subject within a region can meet to discuss teaching problems and methods. Ultimately, however, what goes on in a school is the responsibility of the school's headmaster: inspection of schools in Sweden are rare and undertaken only in extreme circumstances.

'Home languages'

Sweden has a relatively large immigrant population and there has been a great deal of concern about the problem of 'semi-literacy' which is said to be the possible result of attempting to learn Swedish as a school language when pupils have not acquired sufficient grounding in the language used in their home environment. For this reason, children whose parents have a native language or native languages other than Swedish have the option of special language teaching in these languages at all levels of the school system and also in the pre-school day-care centres. In 1982 about 4 per cent of the 86,000 children taking such instruction in the primary school and 15,000 in the upper secondary school were being given lessons in English. Most home-language teaching is carried out by peripatetic part-time teachers who are native speakers of the language in question.

Tertiary education

Admission to Swedish universities is based on students' leaving qualifications from upper secondary school. A general entrance requirement for university education in Sweden is that both Swedish and English have been studied up to the level of the end of the second year of upper secondary school. This means that a student's attainment in English can be of some importance if she or he applies for a course of study for which there is a great deal of competition. The students' grades are relatively important in the selection procedure that then takes place.

The organization of tertiary education in Sweden resembles in some respects the organization of secondary education. One of the aims of the most recent reform of university education was to channel the majority of students into vocationally oriented courses to which the numbers admitted were to be related to the number of jobs that were expected to be available. The majority of students are therefore following university courses (also called lines) which

involve from four to eight terms of full-time study. (The Swedish university term lasts for twenty weeks, and the university year consists of two terms.) It proved difficult, however, to include most arts and modern language subjects in their traditional form within vocationally oriented lines, and provision was also made for students to read individual subjects in any combination that suited them. The term used in Swedish to describe these courses is 'enstaka kurser', which means both 'individual' and 'disconnected' courses, and reflects a second aim of the reform which was to make it possible for students, especially mature students, to study for a term or two as part of a continuing education programme.

English is offered as a degree subject by six universities in Sweden (Lund, Uppsala, Stockholm, Gothenburg, Umeå and Linköping) and three university colleges (Karlstad, Växjö and Örebrö). It is also taught within courses offered at Borlänge, Luleå, the Stockholm Institute of Technology, Chalmers Institute of Technology in Gothenburg, and the Stockholm School of Economics.

A university department in Sweden normally offers a maximum of three terms of study - designated as up to the 20 point, 40 point or 60 point level, where one point corresponds to one week of full-time study. Departments with research programmes can also offer a fourth term of study, often one of the first terms of the doctoral programme. Such 80-point courses are offered at Lund, Uppsala, Gothenburg and Stockholm.

It should also be emphasized that it is relatively rare for a full-time student to finish his or her studies in the time officially allotted. The majority of students spend more than one term on each of the 20-point courses. The Swedish system of study loans encourages students to have some form of part-time job while they are studying, and this tends to slow down their progress.

There is no centralization of the curricula of the Swedish universities, and there is in fact a great deal of variety from department to department. However, most courses involve the study of reading - normally between 2,500 and 4,000 pages of modern prose per term. This matter is studied both from the point of view of its literary qualities and as a means of acquiring vocabulary, and a greater knowledge of the syntax and morphology of English. In their first term students are also likely to be given classes in translation from Swedish to English, in essay writing in English, in systematic comparison of the grammar of Swedish with the grammar of English, in the basics of English phonology and phonetics, in British and American life and institutions, and probably some form of survey of the history of English literature. They are also likely to be given teaching in pronunciation and in conversation, how much depending on the relative level of funding of the different departments.

In their second and third terms students will be expected to continue to study prose, and will probably continue with classes in translation and in the study of grammar. Their study of language, literature and 'life and institutions' will become more specialized, and they will be encouraged to begin to concentrate on either the study of language or of literature. In their third term of study students will be expected to produce a short scholarly analysis on a linguistic or a literary subject. It must be emphasized, however, that there is a great deal of variation between the different departments.

English is also taught as a university subject in a vocationally oriented line combining economics and English offered at the Universities of Lund, Uppsala and Linköping. The English teaching on this line is carried out by the English departments of the respective universities, and in the courses more emphasis is placed on the study of economic texts, the vocabulary of economics, and on life and institutions of the English-speaking countries.

English is also a part of the syllabus at the Stockholm School of Economics, where it is taught by native speakers in the School's own English department, using material specially developed for its students.

A specialized one-term course in translation to and from English is offered at irregular intervals by the University of Gothenburg to students who have already completed three full terms of study in English, and who wish to become professional translators. There are also plans at both Gothenburg and Stockholm to offer courses in interpreting to and from English to similarly qualified students.

At the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm and the Chalmers Institute of Technology in Gothenburg a course in English is offered as an optional course within the full four-year course preparing graduate engineers. These English courses are intended for students in their second or third year of study, and originally they concentrated on the reading skills needed for study within the respective institutions. They have become increasingly concerned with the English needs that students are likely to have in their future profession. These courses are taught by the English departments of the universities of Stockholm and Gothenburg respectively.

English departments also often offer courses in the special language skills needed by other departments: the department in Stockholm organizes, for example, a reading course in English for the department of psychology, and courses in the techniques of writing research papers for departments in the behavioural and natural sciences.

Adult education

Emphasis on the importance of adult education in Sweden in the 1970s led not only to attempts to open up admission to the universities to wider groups of students, but also to the organization of adult education programmes (KOMVUX, 'kommunala vuxenskolan' and later GRUNDVUX, 'grundskolan för vuxna) administered by the local authorities within the framework of the ordinary educational system. The programmes are designed to give all adults the possibility of acquiring educational qualifications from the primary school or from the upper secondary school. In the early 1980s about 167,000 adults were taking KOMVUX or GRUNDVUX courses, many of them in English or mathematics. Classes within the KOMVUX system are free and follow the syllabuses laid down for adult education by the National Board of Education. Pupils can either attend special classes held during the day or evening or, for some subjects in some local authorities, join classes in the ordinary school system. However, most students in adult education of this kind study only one subject at a time rather than several subjects as is normal in the school system.

Distance learning

There has been one major experiment in the use of radio and television in language teaching in Sweden. It took place in the late 1960s and early 1970s when Swedish Radio produced the 'Start' series which was designed to help adult learners with no knowledge of English to acquire proficiency comparable to that taught by the primary schools. In this venture, however, Swedish Radio was collaborating with the voluntary adult educational organizations (see section 7) rather than with the state educational system.

The university departments of English have all been involved with distance learning programmes, using correspondence courses, cassette recorders, some video recordings and, at Umeå, computer terminals. At present the English departments in Linköping and Umeå run distance learning programme in English at university level.

3 Teachers of English

At present there is no shortage of teachers of English in Sweden, and current prognoses suggest that rather more are being trained then there will be work for in the future.

Within the educational system the overwhelming majority of teachers of English are Swedish speakers who have qualified as teachers within the Swedish educational system. The only formal provision for the appointment of native speakers that exists is within the universities, where there are posts as 'foreign lektors'.

The post of foreign lektor is in theory a short-term appointment open only to native speakers of the languages concerned, who hold at least a degree in the subject. At present there are about twenty foreign lektors in English in Sweden, of whom the majority are English. Almost all of them were appointed before 1967 and for this reason have permanent tenure. All other Swedish university appointments are open to all qualified applicants although they are advertised usually only within Sweden. There are five native English speakers with appointments as university lecturers, research assistants or professor in English departments in Sweden (three from the United States, two from the United Kingdom and one from Pakistan).

Within the school system there are only a few native speakers of English, who have either qualified in Sweden or have been able to have their own teaching qualifications accepted as the equivalent of Swedish qualifications. This is fairly difficult, however, as language teachers in Sweden are usually expected to teach at least two foreign languages, or a foreign language and another subject.

Entry to teacher training courses - like all other vocationally oriented courses within further education in Sweden - is limited, and the numbers admitted based on prognoses of the numbers of qualified practitioners needed. However, many of the local university colleges created in Sweden in the 1960s and 1970s were based on the nucleus of a teacher-training college, and reductions in the intake of trainee teachers can encounter fierce resistance from local political representatives. It is probable, therefore, that the numbers of teachers, and especially language teachers, being trained at the moment are higher than necessary.

Teacher training in Sweden is due to be reformed totally. Syllabuses are to be revised and the watertight divisions that today exist between class teachers working in the junior and intermediate levels and the subject specialists working in the senior level and the upper secondary school are to be made less rigid. Subject specialization is to be given rather less weight, educational psychology and the role of the school system within society is to be given more. Because of this reform and because of the uncertainty about the numbers of teachers being trained, no candidates will be admitted to teacher-training programmes in 1987. Instead during that academic year the institutions involved in teacher training will be able to devote the resources allocated to the re-evaluation and replanning of their teacher training programmes.

At present the way in which teachers of English are trained depends upon the level at which they are to teach. Subject specialists who are going to teach English in the senior level of the primary school or in the upper secondary school are required to gain university qualifications in at least two subjects

(in preordained combinations), normally 60 points in one subject, 40 in a second and 20 in a third. Many language teachers, however, augment these qualifications and have 60 points in each of the languages they teach.

In addition to university qualifications in their subjects, subject teachers also have to attend a department of education or a teachers' high school for a year, of which almost one term is spent in teaching practice. Until recently such trainee teachers took their university qualifications before applying for the final teacher training year. Since the establishment of a line for teachers, however, there has been increased integration between the university studies and the teacher training element of the course. The syllabuses for the university courses studied by trainee teachers have been modified and contain more emphasis on didactic studies, and teacher training classes and teaching practice are now interwoven with the university courses to a greater extent.

Teachers who are going to teach in the intermediate level of the primary school study at a teacher training college for three years. At present these courses are offered at fifteen different colleges in Sweden. The students' time is spent on the study of educational theory, in deepening their knowledge of all the subjects which they will teach, and in studying the methodology of teaching these subjects.

The syllabuses of the different training colleges vary but on the whole students study English during the first four terms of the six terms of their course and will be given between 40 and 50 hours of teaching per term. In addition they will have a course in English teaching methodology of about 40 hours in all.

The main emphasis of the teaching in these courses is on the improvement of the students' oral performance, to equip them for their work in the classroom and the demands of the primary school syllabus. Most of the time will be devoted to the study of text and students are expected to have read about 1,000 pages by the end of their training course. A number of students are admitted to these training courses, however, with only two years to study in the upper secondary school and some time has to be devoted to the systematic study of the grammar of English.

It is possible for students on these courses to choose an optional supplementary course in English, which would qualify them to teach English at the senior level of the primary school. At present, however, because there is a surplus of qualified language teachers this option is not offered at any training college.

Students being prepared for teaching in the junior level of the primary school follow a course of two and a half years at a teacher-training college, and of this time they will spend about sixty hours studying English - two hours a week during the second term, and one hour a week during the third, for instance. In a typical course roughly 300 pages of text will be studied during each of these terms, about one third of it intensively. In addition, during the first term pronunciation and phonology will be studied, during the second more emphasis will be placed on grammar, and on the kind of background knowledge about life in the English-speaking countries needed to teach English at the appropriate level of the primary school.

There are large numbers of native speakers teaching English in Sweden for the voluntary educational organizations (see section 7). No qualifications are formally required for such posts, and demands differ from one organization to

another. In recent years, however, as the numbers of qualified applicants have risen, either a teaching qualification from the applicant's native country or one of the Royal Society of Arts' qualifications has been demanded.

One of the voluntary educational organizations, Kursverksamheten, runs training courses preparing mainly native speakers for the Royal Society of Arts Diploma in the Teaching of English as a Second or Foreign Language in Stockholm and in Malmö.

There are no professional organizations as such for teachers of English in Sweden. An organization called LMS 'Lärare i moderna språk' (Modern Language Teachers) exists in some of the larger cities. The role of the professional organizations is played in Sweden by the teachers' trade unions. English teachers are likely to be members of one of two unions: 'Lärarnas Riksförbund' (LR), whose members are mainly subject specialists in the upper secondary school or the senior level of the primary school, or 'Sveriges Lärarförbund' (SL), its members being mainly class teachers in the first two levels of the primary school.

One reason for the role played by the trade unions is that Swedish labour market legislation stipulates that employees should be represented by trade unions in all joint consultation on working conditions. A more important reason is that efforts are made to keep education and educational policy outside party political conflict by ensuring that before proposals are made to parliament they have been discussed in committees made up of representatives of all the political parties, the major trade union affiliations and representatives of Swedish industry. Of the three major trade union affiliations in Sweden, two contain teachers' unions, and often it is these unions which provide the delegates to fill the committee places allocated to trade unions. Committee proposals are usually circulated for comment to a large number of interested organizations. In education the comments of the teachers' unions carry particular weight.

One of the areas in which the trade unions have affected working conditions is that of in-service training. Until the middle of the 1970s it was thought perfectly acceptable for teachers to give up part of their holidays to attend courses. Modern language teachers in particular often used to attend courses arranged by Swedish organizations in different European countries. Sometimes these courses were subsidized, more often participants paid for them out of their own pocket. Today training is expected to take place within the school year and at the expense of the employer.

Again, until the beginning of the 1980s subject teachers had the right to a sabbatical year of study at regular intervals, and many university departments were kept up to strength by teachers on study leave. The time which used to be made available for this form of study is now shared among all categories of staff employed in Swedish schools - the lion's share still however going to teachers and relate to the subjects they teach in.

Because these reforms have taken place so recently, the forms which in-service training takes vary from region to region. On the whole, however, what in-service training there is consists of short courses, arranged during the school year, and attended by specifically seconded personnel. Such courses can either be arranged within the various local authorities or on a national basis.

In addition, teacher's days are a regular feature of the school year in Sweden. Twice or three times a year teachers are relieved of their teaching

for one day so that they can take part in meetings with their colleagues to discuss innovations in the curriculum, listen to lectures or take part in workshops. Speakers for these teachers' days can be textbook writers or publishers, university or training college lecturers, or representatives of the National Board of Education. Teachers of English value contact with native speakers during these teachers' days.

4 Materials support

Teachers of English in Sweden are well supplied with materials. At each level of the primary school there are competing textbooks, with their own supplementary readers, film-strips, wall-charts, tape recordings and teachers' books, produced by the major Swedish publishers. Teachers in the upper secondary school system are almost as well provided for, with the possible exception of materials for English teaching in some of the vocationally oriented lines.

Swedish Radio provides an extensive variety of radio programmes and some television programmes for use in English classes at different levels. Most of the local authorities also maintain audio-visual media centres which provide schools with recordings of the radio and television programmes that have been broadcast, making teachers independent of broadcasting schedules. Little use is made, however, in the school system, of commercially produced video material.

Many university courses in Sweden use books published in English in the United Kingdom or the United States, and English books are widely available in both bookshops and libraries. Most major works in the English language, and a large number of minor works, are available in translation.

5 Educational administration in relation to English teaching

The organization of the Swedish civil service is based on a division between ministries ('Departement'), headed by Ministers, which are responsible for long-term planning and the formulation of legislation to be presented to parliament and boards ('Styrelse'), headed by permanently appointed civil servants, which are responsible for the execution of decisions made by parliament and the application of policies.

At present there are two ministers responsible for educational policy: Lennart Bodström, whose main area of concern is upper secondary and tertiary education, and Bengt Göransson, who is responsible for the compulsory school system.

The National Board of Education ('Sköloverstyrelsen') is responsible for primary, secondary and adult education and is now headed by Erland Ringborg, who took up the post in the spring of 1986. The National Board is divided up into three departments, one dealing with the compulsory primary school system, one with the upper secondary school, and one with adult education. At present, however, the National Board is undergoing extensive reorganization.

Within each of the counties of Sweden there is a 'Länsskolnämnd' (County Education Committee) which supervises the work of all the schools within the

county, organizes contact with teachers, initiates local development projects and is involved in the evaluation of national policies. These committees are also involved in the distribution of government grants. The committees employ inspectors to do much of this work. These inspectors are not subject specialists. Inspection of schools and school programmes only takes place when they are not functioning as they should.

Each municipality in Sweden is responsible for the running of its own schools from its own tax income, with the help of certain government grants. The council of a municipality appoints a school board ('Skolstyrelsen'), which is served by an administrative staff, led usually by a Director of Education ('Skoldirektör').

The work of each school is led by its head ('rektor'), although she or he can be responsible for several schools in the same school zone. Swedish labour market legislation guarantees employees a high degree of participation in the decision making process. The syllabuses for the primary school and upper secondary school encourage a high degree of student participation in decision making processes as an introduction to the functioning of society at large. Parents and parent associations also play an important role in many of the decisions made in the primary school.

The National Swedish Board of Universities and Colleges ('Universitets- och Högskoleämbetet') is responsible for the administration of decisions affecting tertiary education. As Swedish universities enjoy a great deal of autonomy, however, its main duties are connected with the preparation of budgets and the allocation of grants and with selection for university courses with limited intake.

The National Swedish Board of Universities and Colleges is headed by the Chancellor of the Swedish Universities, Professor Carl-Gustaf Andrén: the sections most concerned with the teaching of English are those dealing with education and research in the fields of teaching, headed by Svante Lundgren, and in the fields of information and culture, headed by Yvonne Wessman. The department which deals with the training of university staff, headed by Hans Jalling, has also shown interest in language teaching problems.

6 Development and planning of the teaching of English

The present Swedish school system is the result of an amalgamation of a grammar-school tradition (the 'Gymnasia') stemming from cathedral schools founded towards the end of the Middle Ages, which were then imitated in most of the larger towns, and the system of compulsory universal education ('folkskolor') established in the second half of the nineteenth century. Major reforms took place in the late 1960s when intake to secondary education was broadened and a shift from academic to practical subjects encouraged. This was followed by a reform in 1971, which was designed to bring all educational programmes, vocational and theoretical, following on from the primary school under the same roof.

This aim has still not been fully achieved. Some of the buildings dedicated originally to one of the vocational schools are still used for the upper secondary school line which took its place. Today, however, nearly all upper secondary school courses qualify pupils for admission to some form of higher education, and a pupil's choice of line is probably less influenced by social considerations than used to be the case.

The traditional second language in Sweden up to the end of the Second World War was German, although French long occupied a privileged position in intellectual and court circles. English rapidly became the major second language in the 1950s, however, and in the 1960s and 1970s was taught to widening groups of pupils. At one stage there were even plans to teach English as a second language from the first year of schooling.

The desire to teach English to increasing sections of the school population coincided with the development of teaching methods based on direct method and oral/aural teaching techniques, and resulted in the widespread use of pattern drills, heavy investment in language laboratories and emphasis on the teaching of spoken English to be used for practical purposes. This has created in its turn a receptive attitude to recent emphasis in the world of English language teaching on communicative skills and functional/notional syllabus planning.

The raising of the school-leaving age and the growing numbers of pupils opting for secondary education because of juvenile unemployment has, however, caused problems for the school system not unlike those encountered in England. Recent proposals for teacher-training programmes emphasize the socializing role played by education and subordinate knowledge of a subject to social and pedagogical skills. It is likely that similar considerations will affect syllabus revision in the near future.

Work on revising the syllabus for the upper secondary school has been going on since 1984. This work has been decentralized and projects and experiments are taking place in many different parts of Sweden under the supervision of the National Board and the County Education Committees. Most of the projects have been concerned more with the organization of study programmes, often with the aim of reducing differences between theoretical and practical courses, and postponing the point at which pupils have to opt for a vocationally oriented or further study oriented course. One immediate outcome of some of these projects is likely to be the extension of the two-year vocational courses to three years, with some obligatory period of work experience.

One project dealing with the teaching of English in the upper secondary school is taking place in Upplands Väsby, just north of Stockholm, where traditional division of the course in English and in other subjects into a year by year syllabus is being replaced by a system of basic courses, and supplementary advanced courses which can be taken if the basic course is covered satisfactorily.

It is difficult to say through what channels the ideas that influence the planning and organization of English teaching arrive in Sweden. The National Board of Education is responsible, ultimately, for the formulation of syllabuses and the resulting revisions of teaching material. The National Board is in its turn influenced by the teachers' trade unions, the teacher training colleges, departments of education, departments of English and departments of linguistics. The National Board maintains contacts with the United Kingdom and the United States, and also with the Council of Europe. It is true, however, that Sweden seems to be less receptive to influence from outside than the other Scandinavian countries are and that pride is taken in evolving characteristically Swedish systems.

7 English outside the education system

Adult education has been an important force in Sweden since the 1930s when the 'studieförbund', the voluntary educational organizations, were

established, either as organizations within the trade union movement such as ABF (the Workers' Educational Association) and TBV (the Clerical Workers' Educational Association) or, as in the case of 'Fülkuniversitet' (the People's University), with the student unions of the universities. Today the major voluntary educational organizations are ABF, TBV, Medbörgarskolan, Vuxenskolan and Fülkuniversitet (its local organizations often called 'Kursverksamheten' or KV).

The association of several of the voluntary educational organizations with political parties and trade unions (and in particular of ABF with the Social-Democrat Party and the Labour Organization) enabled them to negotiate generous government grants for many of their activities. These subsidies have made it virtually impossible for any other educational organizations to compete in offering courses outside the educational system. Most of the very few private schools that do exist offer courses in art, or the performing arts.

The voluntary educational organizations have established their own philosophy of education and see their classes as circles of students, in which no one person need be an expert on the subject being studied. Nevertheless, as language teaching, and especially the teaching of English, was established at an early date as an important aspect of their activities, Folkuniversitet in particular attempted to provide all its language circles with leaders who were native speakers and who had been given some training in the techniques of teaching English as a foreign language. This led to the foundation in the early 1950s of the British Centre, followed later by the Centre Française, and to increased employment of native speakers by the other voluntary educational organizations.

Although the voluntary educational organizations charge fees for their courses they are heavily subsidized both by the government and by local authorities, and are subject to strict regulations about the length and duration of the courses they can offer, the size of classes and the frequency of meetings. On the whole they are discouraged from offering courses which are directly comparable to those offered by the state educational system, or aimed at specific vocational requirements, or based on examination syllabuses.

Language classes still constitute about fifteen per cent of the courses offered by the voluntary educational organizations, involving about 80,000 pupils each term, of whom the bulk are studying English. Today there are very few adult beginners in English in Sweden, because of a determined campaign in the late 1960s and early 1970s, in which the government, the voluntary educational organizations and Swedish Radio co-operated to teach English to adults whose schooling had not given them skills in English. In the beginners' classes offered by the voluntary educational organizations the pupils will most probably be immigrants to Sweden of several different language backgrounds.

The majority of the English classes taught by the voluntary educational organizations are at the intermediate or advanced level they are likely to be taught by a native speaker of English and are likely to use one of the text-books produced by the major English publishers. First Things First gave way to Kernel English, which was superseded by Streamline and then by Strategies. Textbooks for adult evening classes are produced by the Swedish educational publishers, and also to a large extent by Swedish Radio or its offshoot TRU, Television and Radio Teaching.

The voluntary educational organizations are also increasingly involved with the provision of language teaching services to industry, again mainly courses in English. These can either be state-subsidized courses in general English

taken at least partly during working hours, or courses in English for Specific or Professional Purposes which a company feels are necessary for certain personnel and which the company itself pays for.

Moreover, the voluntary educational organizations often provide classes prepare students for the Cambridge Lower and Proficiency examinations. These examinations are well known in Sweden and are valued both as an alternative way of providing evidence of skills in English and for their international validity for people wanting to work or study in an English-speaking environment. However, as an increasing number of Swedes are now turning to the United States for further education, it will be interesting to see whether American standard college entrance examinations become more popular.

Swedish Radio has a long history of interest in the teaching of English, usually in co-operation with the voluntary educational organisations. The television series produced by Ian Dunlop in the late 1950s must have been some of the earliest examples of the large-scale use of television as a language teaching medium. This was followed in the late 1960s by the 'Start' series, which aimed to give as large a section of the population as possible skills in English comparable to those imparted in the primary school. Since then a number of courses using television and radio programmes have been produced and broadcast in Sweden. These series and the course-books and course-packages produced by Swedish Radio are still used extensively within English teaching programmes in adult education.

Another alternative form of adult education is to be found in Sweden in the 'folkhögskolor' (people's high schools), a movement which developed in Sweden at the beginning of this century. These are often residential schools connected with one of the popular movements, the temperance organizations, trade unions or religious movements. They often provide courses with a specific bias towards courses for people who intend to work as volunteers in the developing countries, environmental studies or trade union history for instance. These schools offer certificates of education which can be the equivalent of an upper secondary school-leaving certificate. As the folkhögskolor are not bound by the same syllabus requirements as the upper secondary schools, their teaching of English can vary a great deal.

Swedish industry is highly dependent on exports, and it is possible that within the industrial sector English is used at least as widely as Swedish is. Swedish companies are also obliged by law to reserve a certain percentage of the payroll to pay for the further education of employees. A great deal of the further education which both employers and employees feel is necessary is in the use of foreign languages and in particular English. Many of the largest Swedish multi-national companies (such as Volvo, Ericson, Alfa-Laval, Bofors, The Swedish Telecommunications Authority) maintain their own training sections and administer their own English teaching programmes with directly employed staff (often native speakers), freelance consultants or the help of the voluntary educational organizations. Training sections also often deal with the training of future users of the company's products and much of this training is conducted in the medium of English.

The demand for teaching of English for Specific Purposes has created an important market for organizations able to offer such services to small and medium-sized companies which cannot afford to maintain their own training sections. Several of the voluntary educational organizations have set up departments which offer such services, as do a number of freelance consultants working either in Sweden or from the United Kingdom. In arranging courses in English for Specific Purposes the voluntary educational organizations often collaborate with language schools in the United Kingdom.

English-language schools

In Stockholm there are a number of private schools offering primary and lower secondary education in English using international curricula. In Gothenburg there is one such school. The Stockholm local eduational authority also offers English-medium education using the Swedish primary and secondary curricula. There are upper secondary English-medium classes using the

International Baccalaureate curriculum. There are also two boarding schools in Sweden offering upper secondary education in English, a school at Sigtuna preparing students for the International Baccalaureate, and an international gymnasium in Gränna.

Summer courses

For a great many years now, Swedish teenagers have been attending summer courses in the languages which they study as part of the school curriculum, and the vast majority of them travel to the United Kingdom. Two of the organizations which pioneered the development of teenage summer language courses, EF ('Europeiska Ferieskolan') and STS, started in Sweden and originally arranged courses in England. In recent years they have faced competition from other large travel companies, notably Tjaereborg. The general pattern for these summer courses is that the course leaders and half of the teachers are Swedish academics or university students with some experience of school teaching, employed temporarily for the duration of the courses, and that native speakers are used in some of the teaching. Both EF and STS use material that has been prepared in Sweden specifically to meet the needs of students in Swedish schools.

8 British support for the teaching of English

The British Council in Sweden no longer makes a professional contribution to the teaching of English. It is their practice to maintain contact with university departments of English, with ELT and other publishers, with visitors from British ELT schools and other ELT professionals working in Sweden. They contribute financial support for key professional events and for academic links with Britain. In 1986 the Council sponsored three key speakers, Margaret Drabble, Professor David Crystal and Professor Mark Kinkead-Weekes at the Third Nordic English Studies Conference and on subsequent tours of Swedish university departments.

9 American support for the teaching of English

There is no organized support from the agencies of the United States for English teaching in Sweden. The United States Information Service makes available some radio and video recordings to interested users.

10 Other agency support

No other agency is involved in the support of English or English teaching in Sweden.

11 Commercial opportunities

The Swedish market for English teaching materials is probably relative well known to English educational publishers: both Oxford University Press and Longmans have maintained Scandinavian representatives, and Sweden is regularly visited by representatives of all the major publishers. It would appear that it is only as far as adult education is concerned that British textbooks can find any sizeable market. The needs of the state educational system are too specific to be met by general textbooks and initially the market would probably be too small to justify any major investment by a United Kingdom publisher. The central purchasing systems in force within the school system also make it difficult for new titles to penetrate the market. There is, however, an English book shop in Stockholm, which specializes in ELT books and which promotes such titles within the school system. It appears to be increasingly successful in doing so.

The market for computer-assisted teaching material and the associated hardware is not very different. The influence of domestic producers and the National Board of Education's guidelines seem to rule out United Kingdom products, although educational programmes re-written for use on computers available in Sweden may find a market in the future.

The Cambridge examinations are well known in Sweden, and efforts have been made to introduce ARELS examinations and Trinity House examinations. These examinations have little validity in Sweden, where there is scant willingness to accept foreign qualifications. Their popularity reflects the fact that many young Swedes are prepared to travel and want evidence of their command of English. There may well be a similar interest in commercial or professional qualifications which could gain them employment in English-speaking countries.

Current changes taking place in the system of awarding study loans will make it easier for young Swedes to seek further education outside Sweden, especially in fields which are not well provided for in Sweden or where entry to a course of study is blocked by the limited entry system. In some professions there is also a feeling that Swedish qualifications do not perhaps command the respect that those granted by institutions in the English-speaking world do. To what extent this interest will be directed towards the United Kingdom will depend on the comparative costs of such courses.

The Swedish system of grants to adult education seem to preclude any possibility of success for private language schools within the country. However, the wide range of services offered by the voluntary educational organizations sometimes forces them to turn to outside agencies for assistance and co-operation. A number of language schools in the United Kingdom are already providing assistance in the provision of courses in English for Specific Purposes and with specialized consultancy.

Of the many Swedes who travel to the United Kingdom to take part in summer courses the vast majority are adolescents, and they are recruited by the Swedish-based, travel-agency supported summer course organizations described above. Many of the language schools in the United Kingdom are aware of (and possibly overestimate the purchasing power of) the Swedish market and advertise regularly in Sweden.

Academic summer courses could be of interest to Swedish university students studying English, especially if they could offer points which could be included in the degrees for which these students are working. Such accreditation, however, would have to be granted by each of the Swedish universities.

The current attitudes of the Swedish teachers' trade unions to in-service training during holidays and voluntary in-service training limit the possibilities of providing teacher training services to any major extent.

12 Creative writing

Sweden has a lively literary community with several writers' associations, its own section of PEN, and contacts with the rest of the world. The only specifically Swedish society dedicated to a British writer is, not surprisingly, the Tolkien Fellowship, and there is a Joseph Conrad society based in Lund. Sweden's links with the United Kingdom and the United States mean, however, that there are probably Swedish members of most societies devoted to the works of writers in English. Sweden has one major literary prize which can be awarded for original work in any language, the Nobel Prize for Literature. It has a strong and active publishing industry, publishing both original works in Swedish and translations from all major languages. A large number of non-fiction works and textbooks are published in Sweden in English.

13 Current research

Postgraduate work on English language and literature is centred on the university departments in Lund, Uppsala, Stockholm, Gothenburg and Umeå. Each of these universities has a university library, but those at Stockholm and Gothenburg were inaugurated so recently that they have been afflicted by the recent hyper-inflation of publishing costs. Stockholm also has a national copyright library - the Royal Library, and the library of the Swedish Academy - the Nobel Library, both of which are useful libraries for those involved in research into literature, but less adequate for linguistic research. Most serious research workers in English studies in Sweden have access to libraries in the United Kingdom and the United States, however.

The most interesting research project in English in Sweden is probably at Lund, where the corpus of spoken English put together at London University under the aegis of Randolph Quirk is being analysed under the direction of Professor Jan Svartvik. Already several monographs have been published presenting results and the research has formed the basis of two doctoral theses. This corpus, together with the corpora kept on computer at the Univesity of Bergen, in Norway, provides material for most of the computer-based analysis taking place in Sweden.

At Stockholm a research project devoted to establishing the extent of the usage of English in Sweden has just been concluded, under the supervision of Professor Magnus Ljung. It is to be followed by a similar investigation into the use of English in industry in Sweden.

Stockholm also has a project dealing with the teaching and evaluation of composition writing in English and Swedish, in which many of the ideas of the National Writing Project in the United States are being applied to work in Sweden.

Research into literature in Swedish universities is less homogenous and tends to reflect the interests of the individual research workers. Gothenburg recently initiated an interest in Commonwealth literature, and organized an impressive conference on the subject in 1985. Uppsala now has a separate section for American studies.

Jan Svartvik, Professor of English at the University of Lund, is a major figure in research into the English language, not only in Scandinavia, but also in the United Kingdom, where he is one of the co-authors of The Grammar of Contemporary English. His work on computer tagging and the application of computer techniques to corpus analysis has been of central importance.

Swedish research into phonetics and voice production and recognition problems is significant also. This has taken place mainly at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, under Professor Gunnar Fant, and at the Department of Linguistics of the University of Stockholm, under Professor Björn Lindholm.

Lennart Björk, Professor of English Literature at the University of Stockholm, has been responsible for a recent edition of Thomas Hardy's notebooks. In the same department, Dr Gunnel Melchers has been carrying out a survey into the dialects used on the Shetland Isles and the influence on them of Scandinavian languages.

All the English departments have close links with British universities, the vast majority of academic staff having spent some time in study or research at British universities, and many British academics having spent time working in Sweden. At the University of Stockholm, teachers from the United Kingdom are regularly asked to lead short courses for research students and to act as opponents in the disputations customary when a doctoral thesis is presented. Stockholm, Umeå and Linköping also have undergraduate exchange arrangements with Lampeter College in Wales.

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15 General statement

here can be little doubt about the overall success of English teaching programmes within the Swedish school system over the last few decades. English is widely used not only in education but also in industry and in the leisure activities of a large proportion of the population. That lack of knowledge of English could almost be regarded as a social handicap is suggested by the importance placed on the acquisition of skills in English by many immigrants to Sweden.

This success could also constitute the main threat to the teaching of English in Sweden today. As the educational system is asked to cover more areas to prepare pupils for life in an increasingly complex society, there will be less and less classroom time available for the traditional school subjects. Already international comparison suggests that Swedish school-children get fewer hours of English per week than their counterparts in other countries.

The success of the school system becomes in fact somewhat puzzling when one analyses the training of teachers of English in the teacher-training colleges and universities, where comparison with other countries would suggest that Swedish teachers of English have severe disadvantages to overcome.

The amount of time devoted to the study of English in the teacher-training colleges is no greater than that devoted to any other subject, even though it could be argued that the acquisition of proficiency in a foreign language demands the allocation of more resources and more instruction than a subject like history or civics.

The Swedish university system appears to be based upon the assumption that students will study two languages in depth, which means that the average student devotes not more than half of his or her university career to English. Swedish students of English have less opportunity to study language or literature in depth than in those of other countries.

It would also seem that within the university system the resources allocated to modern language departments are no greater than those allocated to other arts departments. English departments tend to be allocated the smallest proportion of these resources because of the relatively high proficiency of their students in English when compared to students of French or German in those languages.

It is surprising that potential teachers of English and students of English at university level are not compelled to spend at least some time in a country in which the language is spoken.

It may not be, in fact, the success of the school system that lies behind the relatively high general proficiency in English of many Swedes, but rather the degree of exposure to English within Sweden. It may well be that the role and status of English in Sweden lies somewhere between that of a foreign language and of a second language.

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